

Space travel activists believe 21st century is their era

Since mankind's first flight off the ground more than a century ago, the dream to be space bound past the birds has been one of our fascinations and goals.

Leonard Nimoy's advocacy for the common person to ride like today's astronauts was expressed in his Jan. 24, 1982 "In Search of" series episode called *Time and Space Travel*.

One of the featured advocacy groups, OASIS, the Los Angeles chapter of the National Space Society, is introduced in the show, and is still beating the drum today for all of us to travel past the stratosphere.

Entrepreneur Elon Musk is answering that call, with his company, Space Exploration Technologies, which is coincidentally located near OASIS's backyard.

In 2012, it became the first private com-



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The Sky's the Limit

pany to ship cargo to the International Space Station, marking a big step in the non-governmental journey mission for groups like OASIS.

Richard Branson's space travel project, Virgin Atlantic's VSS Enterprise, suffered a tragic setback when SpaceShipTwo was destroyed on an Oct. 31, 2014 test flight. One test pilot was killed and another was injured during the cash.

The International Space Station has been upgraded to accommodate guests,

and while it's not the freedom we're looking for, it's well ahead of what groups like OASIS would have envisioned when it started up more than 30 years ago.

Sky watch

On Thursday, Sept. 8 after sun down, look south-southwest to see Mars, Moon and Saturn cluster before they set at midnight.

On Friday, Sept. 16, look east at 8 p.m. for a spectacular harvest moon, which will seem huge.

On Thursday, Sept. 22 at 8:21 a.m. the summer's officially over.

The zodiacal light, a faint, roughly triangular, whitish glow seen in the night sky extended up from the vicinity of the sun along the ecliptic, or zodiac, is difficult to find. The best time is from Thursday, Sept. 29 for two weeks in the east morning twilight.

Public events

Join us Friday, Sept. 9 at 7:30 p.m. for our regular meeting. A short indoor presentation will be followed by outside observing, weather pending. The topic will be "fall in the sky" followed by stargazing through our 11-inch telescope.

Experts are on hand the second Friday of each month at 7:30 p.m. to explain the heavens, teach telescoping skills and help you develop your knowledge of our sky.

For further information, contact Vulcan Tourism at 403- 485-2994 or visit www.vulcantourism.com.

Neel Roberts is a member of the Calgary chapter of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada. Neel welcomes your questions and comments at 403-485-2683 and Neel_Roberts@ptccanada.com.